

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. This Notice of Allowability is in response to Applicant's Request for Continued Examination filed on August 6, 2010. Claims 1-9, 11-12, 14-25 are pending for examination. Claims 1, 4-6, 14 are currently amended. Claims 15-25 are newly added. Claims 10 and 13 have been cancelled.

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

2. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on August 6, 2010 has been entered.

Examiner's Amendment

3. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Timothy J. Balts on June 16, 2011.

4. The application has been amended as follows (the line numbers provided below include those lines in the claim that were struck-through in the 8/6/2010 response):

Cancel claims 23 and 25 without prejudice;

Claim 1, line 2, change "a polymeric matrix" to – a polymeric mixture --;

Claim 1, line 8, change "the polymeric matrix" to – the polymeric mixture --;

Claim 1, line 11, change "the polymeric matrix" to – the polymeric mixture --;

Claim 14, line 7, change "a polymeric matrix" to – a polymeric mixture --;

Claim 14, line 8, change "the polymeric matrix" to – the polymeric mixture --;

Claim 14, line 9, change "the polymeric matrix" to – the polymeric mixture --;

Claim 14, lines 1-2, change "the polymeric matrix" to – the polymeric mixture --;

Claim 17, line 6, change "where R is a straight-chain or branched-chain alkyl residue" to -- where R is a straight-chain or branched-chain alkyl residue with 23 to 35 carbon atoms--;

Renumber claims: Claim 11 is now Claim 10; Claim 12 is now Claim 11; Claim 14 is now Claim 12; Claim 15 is now Claim 13; Claim 16 is now Claim 14; Claim 17 is now Claim 15; Claim 18 is now Claim 16; Claim 19 is now Claim 17; Claim 20 is now Claim 18; Claim 21 is now Claim 19; Claim 22 is now Claim 20; and Claim 24 is now Claim 21.

Original claims 15-16, change "Method of Claim 14" to --Method of Claim 12--;

Original claims 18-22 and 24, change "The hydrophilic polyolefin material of claim 17" to -- The hydrophilic polyolefin material of claim 15 --.

Allowable Subject Matter

5. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: The present claims are Dzen et al. (US 6,008,145) in view of Kinn et al. (US 2001/0008965 A1).

Dzen et al. describes polyolefin fibers that are rendered hydrophilic by applying a finishing composition to the surface of the fibers which comprises a combination of a non-ionic surfactant which can be an alkoxylated C₈-C₁₈ fatty acid and a quaternary ammonia compound. However, the instant claims claim a mixture of a polyolefin and a fatty acid that is added as a melt additive, then extruded to form the claimed hydrophilic polyolefin materials, which is not a coating or otherwise deposited on the surface of the polyolefin material. Dzen does not include a fatty acid incorporated into the mixture, and therefore also does not disclose or suggest the claimed hydrophilic material in which fatty acids in the polymer mixture are activated by a coating comprising a silicone compound and quaternary ammonium compound. Thus, Dzen et al. does not teach or fairly suggest the claimed hydrophilic polyolefin materials and their claimed method of production.

Even though Kinn et al. teaches that the use of fatty acids as hydrophilic melt additives is known, the combination of references still does not disclose or suggest the claimed invention in which the hydrophilic properties of the fatty acid in the polymer mixture is activated by a composition comprising a silicone and a quaternary compound that is disposed on the surface of the polyolefin material. Furthermore, one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made would not have arrived at the claimed hydrophilic polyolefin materials without undue experimentation. This is especially true

since the hydrophilic finish coating taught by Dzen already includes a fatty acid, so it would be unobvious to include one in the melt used to extrude the polyolefin fibers, which is required by the instantly claimed melt additive.

Nowhere in Dzen et al. or Kinn et al. or the combination thereof is it taught to apply the composition of a silicone compound and a quaternary ammonium compound to the surface of the polyolefin material, thereby activating the hydrophilic properties of the polyolefin material, where the fatty acid is intermixed and dispersed in the polymeric polyolefin mixture.

6. In light of the above discussion, it is evident as to why the present claims are patentable over the prior art.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Conclusion

7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to KATIE L. HAMMER whose telephone number is (571)270-7342. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday to Friday, 9:30amEST to 6:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Harold Y. Pyon can be reached on (571) 272-1498. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

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June 17, 2011